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NEW ENGLAND NAMES

By DAVID I. BUSHNELL, JR

THE following document, giving the Indian names of many rivers along the coast of New England, as well as the names of the chiefs whose villages occupied their shores, is now printed for the first time. The original manuscript is in the British Museum, London, and was copied by the writer some years ago. Ever since the discovery of the document the writer has endeavored to learn something of its origin, but without success. Neither name nor date is affixed to the original paper; nevertheless it probably dates from the early part of the seventeenth century. This appears evident not only from the style and form of the writing, but from the fact that it is preserved and associated with documents signed by Charles I, bearing the dates 1639, 1640, and 1644. The document follows:¹

(MSS. Vol. Egerton—2395—fol. 412 et seq.)

The Names of the Rivers and the names of ye cheif Sagamores yt inhabit upon Them from the River Quibiquissue to the River of Wenesquawan.

¹ Smith, in his *Description of New England*, referring to the journey made by him along the coast during the year 1614, wrote:

"The principall habitation Northward we were at, was *Pennobscot*: Southward along the Coast and up the Rivers, we found *Mecadacut*, *Segocket*, *Pemaquid*, *Nuscocus*, *Sagadahock*, *Aumoughcowgen*, and *Kenebeke*; and to those Countries belong the people of *Segotago*, *Pagh huntanuck*, *Pocopassum*, *Taughtanagagnet*, *Warbigganus*, *Nassaque*, *Masherosqueck*, *Wawrigweck*, *Moshoquen*, *Wakego*, *Pasharanack*, &c. To these are alied in confederacy, the Countries of *Ancocisco*, *Accomynticus*, *Passataquack*, *Aggawom*, and *Naemkeck*: All these for any thing I could perceive, differ little in language, fashion, or government, though most of them be Lords of themselves, yet they hold the *Bashabes* of *Penobscot*, the chiefe and greatest amongst them.

"The next I can remember by name, are Mattahunts, two pleasant Iles of Groues, Gardens, and Corne fields a league in the Sea from the maine: Then *Totant*, *Massachuset*, *Topent*, *Secassaw*, *Toheet*, *Nasnocomacack*, *Accomack*, *Chawum*, *Patuxet*, *Massasoyts*, *Pakanokick*: then Cape Cod, by which is *Pawmet* and the Ile *Nawset*, of the language and alliance of them of *Chawum* . . ." (Smith. *Generall Historie*. London, 1627, p. 208.)

FIRST there is Quibequissue upon the East syde whereof dwelleth Aberemite and upon the West syde Astighco.

The next is Panawabsack described to be a great River.

The next is Pemaquid or Segakett and there dwelleth the Bashabe.

Then there is Ramassouk or Ramussouk and there dwelleth Sebathahood.

The next is Panawapaske or Nepammocagan where dwelleth Aramasoge.

Then there is Apumcossock where did Dwell Abecogissick Amenqum and Nedicomokin.

Then you have Aponegeg and there did dwell Mentoermitt Hamerhow and Esabany.

The next is Sagadahock and that Divides it self into two great Branches the one Running to thee northwest the other to the north East. To the West did Dwell Agamaquos Amorcogant and Samowessa two Brothers. But I have forgotten the Rivers name, to the northwest dwelt Apumhamon Sassanow sawes and Ochowomakin. To the north East did dwell Ochoworth and Ocockhamus. And at ye River head above the Lake, Baccadosom.

Then there is Sawaquatock and there did Dwell Agemohock.

Then you have another River called Wedopekeg where dwelleth one Agee whahasnon.

Next unto this is a great Broad River or bay upon ye west Syde whereof, there was one Squamiock that was ye cheif Sagamore, the Rivers name is Merimack as I take it.

These Rivers you are to take particular notice of wth their Sagamores as farr forth as possible shall be able and so to cause them to be Artificaly set Downe in yor Card as you find them with their true distances one from ye other, as also the Island of Teponege. For these I make Account bee all of them to ye eastward of Cape Code with many others.

To the West of Cape code (as in yor Instructions is said) you shall meet with Severall Islands as namely Natcea, Ioncanoke, Akeucanack and Capawick wch is the Largest of them all and wch hath upon the north syde thereof Towards the Mayne 3 Rivers, ye Eastermost is Sasquiaca.

The next is Quatanque, the last is Weiwyout.

At the Eastward end there is another River but evill coming to it by reason of thee Slates and Sands and that is called Whackwhigh (and the Sogum) for here they are not called Sagamores as before. This name was Wavenot who Commands all that part of the Island as doth

Tadosheme the middle part, who doth Command the west part I have forgotten but hee hath been enemye to both ye other two if I be not mistaken.

These Islands use yr best Diligence to make a perfect discovery of as also ye land to the North of them according to y^{or} Instructions for there is great hope they will afford matter of good Consequence, but you will find thee people very false and Malitious in which respect you must bee the more cautious how you deal with Them, they are plentiful in Corne and Tobacco but have not many Scinus (?) if you cannot otherwayes Deale wth them, first making Tryall of all Fayr Courses, then do yor best to Seize their Corne and provision for that will inforce them to commerce and supply their wants and necessityes espetially when they see they cannot offend you but that you are still offensive unto them.

In coming along y^e Coast I could wish to endeavor to take with you (for to bee y^{or} Guide or interpreter) Mentoermit who is the onely Traveller in all those parts That I have heard of and hath y^e opinion of a very honest man and one that doth understand many of their Languages.

I could Speak of other places more westerly but that I leave to y^{or} Industry to find out at y^{or} best leisure.

End

Many maps of the shores of New England have been examined in the endeavor to identify the streams named in the foregoing document, but it has not been possible to locate all. Nevertheless enough have been found to prove the authenticity of the document. Some of the names not identified may have been applied to smaller streams.

Beginning at the north, the rivers mentioned in the paper are:

1. *Quibequissue*. The name Quinobequin appears on the Dutch map of Novi Belgii, 1671. The stream to which the name is attached is the largest on that part of the coast, and is placed about where the Kennebec should be, but the latter is not mentioned, and the stream here referred to lies eastward of the Penobscot.

2. *Panawabsack*. Probably the Penobscot.

3. *Pemaquid* or *Segakett*. "Pemmaquid" appears on the map of Novi Belgii, 1671, and east of it is "Segocket," separated by several other names, showing them to have been regarded at that time as two distinct streams.

4. *Ramassouk* or *Ramussouk*. Not identified.
5. *Panawapaske* or *Nepammocagon*. Not identified.
6. *Apumcossock*. Not identified.
7. *Aponegeg*. Not identified.

8. *Sagadahock*. This is the present Kennebec, and its ancient name has been preserved in that of Sagadahoc County, Maine. Sagadahockleck is found on the Novi Belgii map of 1671; Sagadahok or Kinibeki on the d'Anville map of 1755; Sagadahok on the Lotter map of 1784.

9. *Sawaquatock*. The present Saco. It is given as Sowocatuck on the map of Novi Belgii, 1671, and as Sawokotuk on the d'Anville map, 1755.

10. *Wedopekeg*. Not identified.

11. *Merimack*. The present Merrimac, in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

The rivers *Sasquiaca*, *Quatanque*, *Weiwyou*, and *Whackwhigh*, on the island *Capawick*, are not identified.

Cape code, is, of course, Cape Cod.

The island *Teponege*, "eastward of Cape Code" is not identified. Four islands are named "To the West of Cape code":

1. *Natcea*. This is probably Nantucket. On the map of Novi Belgii, 1671, it appears as Natocke.

2. *Ioncanoke*. Not identified.

3. *Akeucanack*. Not identified.

4. *Capawick*. This being "the Largest of them all" is unquestionably Long Island.

"Mentoermit, who is the onely Traveller in all those parts" evidently lived on the *Aponegeg*, together with Hamerhow and Esabany. This stream, although not identified, appears to have been just east of the present Kennebec, perhaps the present Sheepscot, a noted Indian resort in early days: Mentoermit was probably an Abnaki.

No attempt will be made to identify any of the many names of individuals mentioned in the document; some may occur on treaties or in early narratives; others may be known locally, but it would require one well acquainted with the country to recognize them.